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WOSTEAR

woman WELLBEING

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By JENNIFER TIPPETT

PLUNGING my aching body into a wheely bin of iced water, I screamed.

No, it wasn't a torture chamber, it was a boutique bootcamp – and I was promised this treatment would work wonders.

It was around 5pm and I'd been exercising since 6.30am thanks to two buff men in Army fatigues who, helpfully, stopped me running away.

To get trim for the beach, I decided to follow in the footsteps of model Sophie Anderton, stars of Towie, actress Tamzin Outhwaite and TV personality Chantelle Houghton by trying No1 Boot Camp.

As an active person I thought I would breeze through three days of running around. Plus I found out the chef was top-notch and I was thrilled I wouldn't starve.

Arriving at the big farmhouse in Heacham, north Norfolk, I had been greeted by bootcamp "Mum" Paula, who showed me to my room.

Then a trainer, who looked alarmingly like an Action Man figure, weighed me and explained the rules.

He said firmly: "No contraband, being late or alcohol. We work on military time here, which means we begin five minutes before the start time."

He pointed at a long daily itinerary of boxing, weights, circuits and hiking starting with a run to the beach at 6.30am.

Strict

Before heading off for an early night I met the other guests.

Chatting to the group, it was clear that, although getting fit was a bonus, they had all come to No1 Boot Camp to lose weight – despite some appearing very slim and fit.

Paula said: "It's all about pushing yourself as an individual. We have all abilities here. People come for all different reasons. It's our job to make sure they go away with a positive mindset to carry on living in a healthy way."

Dinner times are strict and snacks are forbidden except for those the camp provides, a tiny lump of flapjack or an oatcake with a scraping of egg.

To increase weight loss, every meal is portion-controlled and the camp only "caters for food allergies and special requirements, NOT dislikes".

This ethos seems strict but it makes sense. There are foods at the camp that some guests have never tried.

By introducing new, healthy foods it is hoped the pattern of poor choices changes.

There are talks on nutrition and everyone is urged to drink lots of water and herbal tea.

No caffeine or refined sugar are allowed – apart from one heavenly cup of real coffee for breakfast.

Next morning, after the early run, I slurped down a mug-full (caffeine never felt so good). With a tiny but delicious breakfast of tomatoes on toast, I felt ready to take on the world.

Next I was thrown some boxing gloves as the Rocky theme blared from the farmhouse. The instructors belted for us to keep moving or we would do "30 more burpees" so we frantically jogged on the spot.

Some of the bootcamps had been here for weeks so were well accustomed to



I did all this to get bootiful

SUN GIRL TACKLES FITNESS COURSE

camp life. They moved around like military robots programmed to get on with it – no matter how much muscles ached. I paired up with a lady who was very fit and we began sparring. I gave it my all in the first 20 minutes but after 40 minutes was seriously flagging. My arms throbbed and I couldn't work out if it was sweat or tears rolling down my cheeks. The instructor roared: "If you stop, the group starts the set again." Terrified, but filled with adrenaline, we pulled through before collapsing, cradling our water bottles and gasping. I whispered to my partner: "I need a gin and tonic." She just nodded, speechless. After a short rest and a fish-and-vegetable lunch. The group looked

refreshed. The Thousand Rep challenge was next – the hardest test of the course. It involves ten exercises done 100 times over an afternoon. You do as much as you can but the aim is to have a tick in each exercise box by dinner time. The music started pumping and we all start moving. Like lemmings, we moved from one exercise to the other in perfect silence. Everyone was exhausted but focusing on the goal... dinner. I picked up a sandbag and started running between cones with it in my arms. Next up was the Man Maker, the hardest exercise. It is a cross between a press-up and weightlifting for your arms in one fluid exercise, and it leaves your muscles burning. "Keep going team," shouted the instructor over the sound system. Everyone stepped it up a gear before flopping when he called time. But the biggest

demand was to come – the infamous ice bath. It is not mandatory but we were all strongly advised to get in. Despite the initial shock it was quite soothing and I was promised it would prevent my muscles from seizing up. After a full-on day, I felt smug as I tucked into my evening meal. I knew I had burned far more calories than I had eaten – and it was definitely the most fun I had ever had in gym kit. Feeling like I was on a girly sleepover, I wanted to stay up late and chat with the other campers but just as a DVD started we were swiftly reminded by the instructors that we should get an early night. "You'll be lifting telegraph poles in the morning and dragging tyres along the beach," they said. With that terrifying thought in my mind I scurried to the bunk rooms. And after three days at bootcamp I'd lost 4lb and was so happy.

WIN
A bootcamp week

DO you want to drop a dress size or tone up for your summer holiday? Look no further than Sun Woman's bootcamp competition. For your chance to win a week for yourself at No1 Bootcamp, Norfolk – including food and accommodation – email your name and your contact details to win@the-sun.co.uk by midnight on Sunday, July 28, 2013. Make sure you put **BOOTCAMP** in the subject line of your email. The winner will be picked at random on July 29. One entry per person. (UK residents 18+ only. No cash alternative. Travel not included. Prize must be taken by July 27, 2014.) For more information visit no1bootcamp.com.

'YOU'LL BE LIFTING TELEGRAPH POLES IN MORNING'